

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, including the step of determining an actual change in a rate of consumption of the commodity, in real time, for each device after activation of the subscribed energy management program and recording the rate of change in a memory.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 644, wherein the at least one of the incentive ~~an alternative rate~~ and the a-billing adjustment is also a function of historical usage information.
6. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 644, wherein the at least one of the incentive ~~an alternative rate~~ and the a-billing adjustment is a function of an actual cost related to the commodity while the subscribed energy management program is activated.
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, including the step of providing a user interface for interaction with the customer.
9. (Original) A method, as set forth in claim 8, wherein the user interface is accessible through a web browser.
10. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, wherein each device has an associated node, and the method includes the step of allowing the customer to control one or more of the devices through the associated node.

11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 64+, including the steps of:
 - setting a budget goal; and,
 - monitoring an aspect of usage of the commodity related to the budget goal.
15. (Original) A method, as set forth in claim 14, wherein the budget goal is defined in terms of usage of the commodity.
16. (Original) A method, as set forth in claim 14, wherein the budget goal is defined in terms of cost of actual amount of the commodity used.
17. (Original) A method, as set forth in claim 14, wherein the budget goal is defined relative to a predetermined time period and the method includes the step of generating an alert if actual usage will exceed the budget goal in the predetermined time period.
18. (Original) A method, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the alert is sent to the customer.
19. (Original) A method, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the alert is sent to the utility.
20. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 64+, wherein the commodity is electrical power.
21. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 64+, wherein the commodity is water.

22. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, wherein the commodity is gas.

23. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, including the step of automatically activating the subscribed energy management program under a predetermined set of conditions.

24. (Original) A method, as set forth in claim 23, wherein the predetermined set of conditions includes at least one of a time of day and a day.

25. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, including the step of manually activating the subscribed energy management program as a function of an actual demand of the commodity.

26. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, wherein the subscribed energy management program at least one of shifts demand away from a first time period and eliminates demand for the first period.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 6427, wherein the step of adjusting the operational settings for each device ~~controlling the subset of devices~~ includes the step of at least one of preventing and limiting usage of the commodity during a predetermined period of time.

29. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 6427, wherein at least one of the devices has an operating setpoint, and wherein the step of adjusting the operational settings for each device ~~controlling the subset of devices~~ includes the step of modifying the setpoint.

30. (Currently amended) A method, as set forth in claim 641, wherein each device has an associated node, and the method includes the step of downloading to each

node, a program schedule containing scheduling information for the energy management program.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the control system determines an actual rate of change in the rate of consumption induced by activating the energy management program.

36. (Cancelled)

37. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6536~~, wherein the at least one of the incentive ~~an alternative-rate~~ and billing adjustment is also a function of historical usage information.

38. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6536~~, wherein the at least one of the incentive ~~an alternative-rate~~ and billing adjustment is a function of an actual cost related to the commodity while the subscribed energy management program is activated.

39. (Cancelled)

40. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the user interface is accessible through a web browser.

41. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6333~~, wherein each device has an associated node for allowing the customer to control one or more of the devices through the associated node.

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the system further comprises a the-user interface that allows the customer to override ~~cancel~~ the subscribed energy management program after it has been activated.

45. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~4433~~, wherein the user interface allows the customer to set a budget goal ~~and the at least one node monitors an aspect of usage of the commodity related to the budget goal.~~

46. (Original) A system, as set forth in claim 45, wherein the budget goal is defined in terms of usage of the commodity.

47. (Original) A system, as set forth in claim 45, wherein the budget goal is defined in terms of cost of actual amount of the commodity used.

48. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim 45, wherein the budget goal is defined relative to a predetermined time period ~~and the at least one node generates an alert~~ is generated if actual usage will exceed the budget goal in the predetermined time period.

49. (Original) A system, as set forth in claim 48, wherein the alert is sent to the customer.

50. (Original) A system, as set forth in claim 48, wherein the alert is sent to the utility.

51. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the commodity is electrical power.

52. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the commodity is water.

53. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the commodity is gas.

54. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the control system automatically activates the subscribed energy management program under a predetermined set of conditions.

55. (Original) A system, as set forth in claim 54, wherein the predetermined set of conditions includes at least one of a time of day and a day.

56. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the control system allows the subscribed energy management program to be manually activated as a function of an actual demand of the commodity.

57. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein the subscribed energy management program at least one of shifts demand away from a first time period and eliminates demand from the first time period.

58. (Cancelled)

59. (Cancelled)

60. (Currently amended) A system, as set forth in claim ~~6533~~, wherein at least one of the devices has an operating setpoint, and wherein control system adjust the operational settings of the device ~~the subset of devices~~ by modifying the setpoint.

61. (Cancelled)

62. (Cancelled)

63. (Cancelled)

64. (New) A method for providing a consumption management system to a plurality of customers of a utility of a commodity that allows the utility to manage demand for the commodity, wherein the utility delivers the commodity to a plurality of customer sites each having a plurality of devices that use the commodity, wherein each device is equipped to determine the instantaneous rate at which the commodity is being delivered to the device, the method comprising the steps of:

allowing each customer to individually subscribe to one or more of a plurality of energy management programs defined by the utility;

measuring the instantaneous rate at which the commodity is being delivered to each device at the plurality of customer sites;

sending the instantaneous rate at which the commodity is being delivered to each device to the utility;

providing a device type indicator to the utility for each device, the device type indicator identifying the type of the device;

defining a subset of the devices at the utility, wherein the subset of devices includes devices of the same type in use by the subscribing customers;

determining at the utility, in real time, the capacity of the commodity that can be managed for the subset of devices by activating the subscribed energy management program for the subset of devices, wherein the subscribed energy management program defines whether the subscribing customers can override the subscribed energy management program after activation;

activating at least one of the subscribed energy management programs when the total demand for the commodity approaches a threshold capacity determined by the utility, wherein activation of the subscribed energy management program adjusts operational settings for each device of the subset of devices to reduce consumption of the commodity by the subset of devices;

verifying, in real time, a reduction in the rate at which the commodity is being delivered to each device of the subset of devices following activation of the subscribed energy management program;

if permitted by the subscribed energy management program, overriding the adjusted operational settings for each device during activation of the subscribed energy management program upon request by the subscribing customer;

if not permitted by the subscribed energy management program, preventing the override of the adjusted operational settings for each device during activation of the subscribed energy management program upon request by the subscribing customer; and providing an incentive, such incentive including at least one of a fixed billing adjustment, a proportionally scaled billing adjustment, an incentive rate, and a rebate, to each subscribing customer based on the actual reduction in the rate the commodity is delivered to the customer site following activation of the subscribed energy management program.

65. A system for allowing a utility to selectively reduce the consumption of a commodity, the commodity being delivered to a plurality of customer sites by the utility, wherein each customer site has a plurality of devices that use the commodity, the system comprising:

- a plurality of devices positioned at each of the plurality of customer sites, each of the devices being equipped to determine the instantaneous rate of commodity consumption at the device and provide a device type indicator identifying a type of the device;

- a distribution network coupled to the plurality of devices at the plurality of customer sites for delivering the commodity to the plurality of devices;

- a control system coupled to the distribution network for controlling the delivery of the commodity over the distribution network to the plurality of devices, the control system including at least one computer;

- a computer network configured to provide communication between the control system and the plurality of devices;

- wherein the control system is configured to:

- allow each of the customers to individually subscribe to one or more energy management programs defined by the utility;

receive the instantaneous rate at which the commodity is being delivered to each device at the plurality of customer sites, the instantaneous rate being sent by each of the devices;

receive the device type indicator from each of the devices;

define a subset of the devices at the utility, wherein the subset of devices includes devices of the same type in use by the subscribing customers;

determine at the utility, in real time, the capacity of the commodity that can be managed for the subset of devices by activating the subscribed energy management program for the subset of devices;

define in the subscribed energy management program whether subscribing customers can override the energy management program after activation;

activate the subscribed energy management program for the subset of devices at the utility when the total demand for the commodity approaches a maximum threshold for the utility, wherein activation of the energy management program adjusts operational settings for each device of the subset of devices to reduce consumption of the commodity by the subset of devices;

verify, in real time, a reduction in the rate at which the commodity is being delivered to each device of the subset of devices following activation of the subscribed energy management program;

if permitted by the subscribed energy management program, override the adjusted operational settings for each device during activation of the subscribed energy management program upon request by the subscribing customer;

if not permitted by the subscribed energy management program, prevent the override of the adjusted operational settings for each device during activation of the subscribed energy management program upon request by the subscribing customer; and

provide an incentive, such incentive including at least one of a fixed billing adjustment, a proportionally scaled billing adjustment, an incentive rate, and a rebate, to each of the subscribing customers based on the actual capacity of the commodity managed at the customer site by activation of the subscribed energy management program.